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ABSTRACT

This paper explains that the teacher participants at the conference explored teacher-made character education kits based on good children's literature. They examined the values component in the books and practiced developing hands-on activities for parents and children to do at home, activities that support the values that parents and teachers are helping students to develop. Handouts for kit development and a bibliography organized by values were shared. (Contains 10 references.) (NKA)

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"Character Education Literacy Kits: Supporting the Home/School Connection"

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Abstract: Participants will explore teacher-made character education kits based on good children's literature. They will examine the values component in the books and will practice developing hands-on activities for parents and children to do at home, activities that support the values that parents and teachers are helping students to develop. Handouts for kit development and a bibliography organized by values will be shared.

Description of the Program

1. *Objectives of the Program*

Objective 1:

To demonstrate a practical and effective strategy for parents and teachers to bridge values teaching with children's literature.

Objective 2:

To explore teachers', parents', and children's understanding of the values expressed in literature.

Objective 3:

To provide specific activities and already made kits for the purposes of participant development of their own kits for home and school.

2. *Content to be presented*

Students need to learn in a school environment that *demonstrates* values and supports the values that parents are already teaching at home. Public opinion polls and other research data support the idea that parents and teachers are partners in the teaching of values. The development of character education home kits based on good children's literature provides a bridge between home and school in the teaching of values. This workshop will provide already made kits for teachers to explore, hands-on guided experience in developing kits for the classroom/home use, and a bibliography of books and ideas arranged by values. Documented use of such kits in a Midwest city will be provided. The presenter's book, *Teach your children values: 95 things parents can do* will be available for participants to read or buy.

The following outlined activities will be shared:

1. **Outline for development of Character Education Kits**
2. **Workhship and Rubric for Kits development**

1. Character Education Kits (Sharon Andrews, 1999)

There is a great deal of support from legislators and parents for the teaching of values in public schools today. Our goal is not to impose values on children, but rather to give them opportunities to come to their own conclusions about the the best ways to think, work, play, and interact with others. One of the wonderful tools that both teachers and parents can use to help children arrive at positive, pro-social values is good children's literature. Literature provides interesting settings, problems to solve and characters who make good and bad choices and learn to deal with the consequences of their actions. The discussion of the plots, problems,and characters' decision-making in stories provide a safe place to discuss values and the motives for a person's actions. A Character Education kit contains one excellent book that focuses on one or two values such as self-concept, honesty, courage. The kits also contains ideas and activities that reinforce the values in the book. For example, an excellent book about patience and self-concept is "Leo, the Late Bloomer" by Robert Krauss.

Leo, the Late Bloomer
Robert Krauss

- Your kit should contain a summary of the book: (1/4-1/2 page typed and laminated).
- A list of 5 interesting, open-ended questions parents can ask about the book that help focus of the values.
- Three activities that parents can do with their children to reinforce the values in the book.

(Simple step-by-step direcions typed and laminated)

Example of questions: (questions in parents kits are less "involved" than those you would use in the classroom. Do not use those below as models for your lesson plans for use in your classroom)

1. How does the illustrator of this book help you to see how Leo is feeling? Do you ever feel that way?
2. How are Leo's friends different from Leo? Are there some things that your friends can do that you can't? (and vice versa)
3. At the end of the book, Leo looks happy. Why? Can you remember a time when you learned to so something new? How did you feel?
4. What is something that is easy for you to do now that you couldn't do when you were little?
5. What is something that is hard for you to do now that someone older can do easily?

Example of activities: (see Andrews, <u>Teach Your Children Values....</u>)

1**. Concept Focus.** After reading "Leo", ask your child, "What do you think it means that Leo was a "late bloomer?" Discuss this concept with your child. Share ways in which you or other family menbers learned tasks "late" and that everyone

has their own timetable for learning things.

2. Make a "Blooming" book.

• Enclosed in the bag is a little blank book. On the front, write "Mary's (your child's name) Blooming Book".

• Open the book. On the first page (left-hand side) at the top write: "I have bloomed at:...."

Then write with you child (or for them) one thing they have learned how to do--tie their shoes, whistle, use the remote control, make toast, etc. Every skill or activity if fair game!

• On the right hand side, at the top of the page, write "I still want to bloom at...". Then write one thing your child would like to learn to do.

• Continue with the book writing as many "bloomed at" and "still want to bloom at" pages as your child can think of.

• You may keep the book. Hang it on the frig and add new "blooming" skills as they are mastered.

3. Make a "Me Box!".

• Find a shoe box or other small box.

• Have your child cover the box with wrapping paper or in some way decorate the box.

• Ask your child to gather up small items that would tell someone who he/she is and what is important to him/ner and put them in the box. (a ping-pong ball, a piece of music, a trophy).

• Your child can take the box to school to share (class can guess what each items means, why it is important, what it tells) or share at dinner, or share with visiting friends and relatives.

2. Character Education Kits Rubric (Sharon Andrews, 2001)

.A Character Education kit contains one excellent book that focuses on one or two values such as self-concept, honesty, courage. The kits also contains ideas and activities that reinforce the values in the book.

***Your kit should contain*:**

• A parent/guardian letter:

Your Parent Letter:

• Does the letter indicate in some way that parents and teachers are working together to teach values? _____

• Pretend you are a parent. Does the letter make you want to read the book and do the activities? _____

• Is there a respectful tone in the letter? _____

• Are the activities briefly summarized? _____ Do the activities have names? _____

• How could this letter be improved?

• **A summary of the book:**
Your book title and summary:

• **A list of 5 interesting, open-ended questions parents can ask about the book that help focus of the values:**
Your questions:

Questions:

• Is there a summary of the book: (1/4-1/2 page typed and laminated of in the body of the parent letter)? _____

(You can begin with simple recall questions to "warm up" and help the parent see if the child got the basic information in the book, but the 5 open-ended questions should be in addition to those.)

• Is there a list of 5 (or less for initial drafts) interesting, open-ended questions parents can ask about the book that help focus of the values.? _____
(Are the draft questions open-ended? (in other words, do they allow for differences of opinions and some individual thinking? _____
• Do the draft questions relate directly or indirectly to the values in the book?
_____
• Do you think parents will find the questions useful and interesting?_____
• How can the questions be improved?

• **Three activities that parents can do with their children to reinforce the values in the book.**
(see Andrews, Teach Your Children Values....)
Your activities:

Activities:

• What grade level is the kit developed for? _____
• Will kids of that grade/age find the activities interesting? _____
• Does the activity have simple step-by-tep directions with bullits or numbers?
_____
• How could the activity be improved?

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